

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4086

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, FR, MASS

SUBJECT: FRENCH ARMS SALES TO SOUTH AFRICA

REF: STATE 190641

1. VERBATIM TEXT FRENCH PRESIDENT'S AGUST 9 STATEMENT AT INGA
NOT AVAILABLE. OFFICIAL ZAIRIAN NEWAGENCY AZAP AUGUST 11
REPORTED INTERVIEW AS FOLLOWS:

"THE FRENCH PRESIDENT ALSO STATED THAT HIS COUNTRY'S
POINT OF VIEW ON APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA IS IDENTICAL
TO THAT OF ZAIRE. THUS, HE STRESSED, FRANCE, WHICH IS
FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF NAMIBIA, HAS DECIDED ON A TOTAL
EMBARGO ON THE DELIVERY OF ARMS TO SOUTH AFRICA."

2. KINSHASA DAILY SALONGO AUGUST 7 REPORTED INTERVIEW WITH GISCARD
AT PARIS (DATE UNSEPCIFIED) AS FOLLOWS:

"Q. FRENCH POLICY IN SOUTH AFRICA AND IN ITS (FRANCE'S)

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AFRICAN TERRITORIES (COMORES, DJIBOUTI...) IS CONTRARY

TO THE ZAIRIAN POSITION AND THAT OF THE OAU, THAT IS
OF AFRICA. WHAT IMPORTANCE DO YOU ATTACHE TO THIS DIVERGENCE.

A. FRANCE'S AFRICAN POLICY HAS ALWAYS BEEN INSPIRED BY
RESPECT FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF THE SELF-DETERMINATION OF
PEOPLES, WHICH SHE (FRANCE) HAS ALWAYS APPLIED WITH GREAT
FAIRNESS. SO FAR AS SOUTH AFRICA IS CONCERNED, FAITHFUL TO
HER TRADITIONS, SHE HAS FORMALLY AND ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS
CONDEMNED THE POLICY OF APARTHEID WHICH SHE CONSIDERS CONTRARY
TO THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

3. ALTHOUGH IN TERMS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER, THIS CONCERNS
THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF A STATE, FRANCE, MINDFUL OF THE CONCERNS
OF OAU MEMBERS, HAS DECIDED ON CERTAIN STEPS. THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT
HAS, IN PARTICULAR, DECIDED TO CEASE EXPORTING ARMS TO SOUTH AFRICA.
THUS IT APPEARS THAT THE POLICY OF THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT DOES NOT
CONFLICT WITH OAU ASPIRATIONS. AT MOST, THEY MIGHT DIFFER CONCERNING
METHODS AND WAYS OF ACTION. IN THIS REGARD, FRANCE DOES NOT BELIEVE
THAT ISOLATION - BANISHMENT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY - IS
NECESSARILY AN EFFECTIVE MEASURE.

4. WITH REGARD TO THE COMORES, AND THE FRENCH TERRITORY OF AFARS
AND ISSAS, FRANCE'S POSITION IS UNAMBIGUOUS: SHE IS TRUE TO THE
PRINCIPLE OF THE SELF-DETERMINATION OF PEOPLES, A PRINCIPLE
UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE UNITED NATIONS."

COMMENT: FRENCH AMBASSADOR CLAIMING HE WAS NOT PRIVY TO
DECISIONS ON DETAILS OF ARMS EMBARGO, WAS UNWILLING TO
INTERPRET GISCARD'S ANNOUNCEMENT EXCEPT TO SAY THAT IT COVERED
AIR AND GROUND MILITARY EQUIPMENT, NOT NAVAL. HE DID NOTE
HOWEVER THAT MATTER HAD BEEN DECIDED AT HIGHEST LEVELS IN
GOVERNMENT BEFORE GISCARD CAME TO ZAIRE. IN FACT, AMBASSADOR
SAID, EVERY ONE OF FRENCH PRESIDENT'S STATEMENTS HAD BEEN CAREFULLY
WORKED OUT PRIOR HIS DEPARTURE FROM PARIS.
WALKER

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